MSc IN
Forensic Psychology
Message from the MSc in Forensic Psychology Course Team

Thank you for considering the MSc in Forensic Psychology at the University of Leicester’s School of Psychology. We see our teaching role as providing postgraduate and professional education of the highest possible quality in the field of forensic psychology. Our course has two main characteristics. Firstly, we teach you about the most important and up-to-date thinking and research. Secondly, and equally importantly, we seek to provide an appreciation of how research and ideas can be applied to help solve real-life problems.

This course is informed and enriched by the research, consultancy and professional activities of our staff. Members of the course team have been involved in advisory and consultancy roles within the Prison Service, the Police, the Ministry of Justice, the Northern Ireland Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Department of Health, The Probation Service, and are regularly called as expert witnesses. Course staff are well recognised for their research into programme evaluation and effectiveness. They are also widely published on topics related to the development of offending, eyewitness bias, investigative interviewing, sexual offending, and personality traits related to offending.

We hope that you find this brochure helpful and informative. If you have any further queries or require any other information about the MSc in Forensic Psychology, then please contact the course administrator or one of us.

The MSc in Forensic Psychology Team
Why study Forensic Psychology at Leicester?

- Our research spans the major fields of psychology and you will be taught by those leading cutting-edge developments in your field, allowing you to benefit from those developments as they occur.

- The University of Leicester holds one of the largest groups of forensic psychologists in the UK and Europe.

- Our research expertise includes work on developmental trajectories in suggestibility and memory illusions; the interviewing of suspects and witnesses; the identification of false allegations; the development of offending, risk assessment and interventions with offenders; sexual offending; bullying; the understanding of forensic evidence throughout the Criminal Justice System; and personality traits driving antisocial behaviour.

- Our staff have significant experience in applying their theories in real-life situations and course staff have taken on consultancy roles advising police forces and agencies, and have carried out evaluations for agencies including the Northern Ireland Office and the Ministry of Justice.

- The course team have strong international and local connections with other universities, medium secure units, Youth Offending Services and Police Departments.

- The School of Psychology is one of the longest established University Psychology Departments in the UK.

How to apply

Our application processes are designed to be user-friendly. Our staff are happy to advise if you have any queries about your application.

You can apply via www.le.ac.uk/pgapplyonline
MSc Forensic Psychology

Aims and Objectives

The principal aim of the course is to equip you with a sound understanding of a broad range of topics in criminological, forensic and legal psychology. This knowledge includes not only an appreciation of theory and fact, but also an awareness of the strengths and limitations of research evidence, as well as its applications. This will enable you to develop the skills needed to seek employment in the field of forensic psychology with a view to obtaining the status of Chartered Forensic Psychologist and HCPC registered Forensic Psychologist.

Duration and Mode of Study

The MSc Forensic Psychology is a one year, full-time course. The course starts in October each year.

Course Structure

You will undertake six modules and a dissertation portfolio.

“\nI completed the campus-based MSc in Forensic Psychology. I learned an invaluable amount about forensic theory, research and its application. The course content inspired a real enthusiasm for forensic work and was relevant to all areas of forensic psychology and practice.”

“The teaching on the MSc in Forensic Psychology is really strong and they often use external speakers from places like the Prison Service, the NHS or lawyers to talk to us about how Forensic Psychology informs their work. This really helps to bring some variety to the course and helps your understanding of the academic material as you can see how it is applied.”
Modules

The Psychology of Criminal Behaviour
This module explores the different levels of explanation needed to understand the various pathways into antisocial behaviour. Topics covered include the role of individual differences, biological variables, social cognitive, and social factors in the development of offending; the specific offences of violence and sexual offences; and offender profiling.

Legal Psychology
This module explores the interface between law and psychology. Among the topics covered are: interviewing suspects and witnesses; methods of enhancing testimony; lie detection; offender profiling; the psychology of terrorism; accuracy of eyewitness memory; child witnesses in court; and identification procedures.

Forensic Psychology Practice
This module involves a series of sessions that examine contemporary issues within forensic psychology practice. More specifically it considers: testing and risk assessment; what prison and probation psychologists do; expert witnessing; conducting evaluations of interventions; giving evidence at tribunals/hearings; and how to interview offenders.

Research Methods
This module provides you with an understanding of the research process. The module covers the different techniques used in forensic psychology research, including quantitative and qualitative methods. Training is also provided in computer statistical packages such as SPSS.

Psychology and the Courts
The aim of this module is to deal with the psychological issues concerned with court hearings, tribunals, and related activities. Topics covered include: the nature of the court system and the way it operates; legal concepts of evidence; the nature of advocacy; examination and cross-examination; factors that relate to the credibility of witnesses; legal decision making by judges and juries; and issues relating to being an expert witness.

Assessment and Treatment of Criminal Behaviour
This module provides information about the methods of assessing and treating offenders. Topics covered include: approaches to the treatment and prevention of offending; models of intervention; how offenders are dealt with under the Mental Health Act; the role of mental impairment and personality disorder; the treatment of sexual and violent offending; and assessment and treatment in prisons, hospitals and the community.

Dissertation Portfolio
The dissertation portfolio forms a substantial part of the MSc. This module spans the whole academic year and requires you to undertake an empirical research project on a forensic psychology topic. This involves designing and getting ethical approval for the research, conducting the research, and writing it up for an academic audience. Students will learn about the ethics of undertaking research within the field of forensic psychology, methodological issues, and how to present their research to the intended audience.

Assessment
The course uses a continuous assessment system and there are no formal written examinations. Each of the academic modules is assessed through a 4,000 word assignment, with the exception of Research Methods which has assessments throughout the module, and an open-book statistics examination.
“I completed the campus-based MSc Forensic Psychology. I was fortunate to have prior practical experience in the field, but the quality and components of the course strengthened this experience by providing a sound theoretical basis. I found that the small group size and enthusiastic staff created a supportive learning environment and the outside speakers demonstrated the various ways in which forensic psychology can be applied.”

The British Psychological Society (BPS)

Becoming a Chartered Forensic Psychologist

For those seeking to obtain Chartered Forensic Psychologist Status through the British Psychological Society the current BPS regulations require that the following three steps must be completed:

1. A qualification that confers the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) of the BPS is obtained. See page 8 for details.

2. An appropriate MSc qualification in forensic psychology that is accredited by the BPS.

3. A minimum of two years’ experience under the supervision of a Chartered Forensic Psychologist (Stage 2 of the BPS Qualification in Forensic Psychology) is completed.

Successful completion of the MSc will satisfy step 1 and 2 of the above criteria.

After completion of the MSc, you may gain supervised experience in a range of settings, including the Prison Service, Probation Service, NHS and secure hospitals in the private sector with mentally disordered offenders; police; and courts. Information about how this period of supervised experience should be structured can be obtained from the Division of Forensic Psychology of the BPS. www.bps.org.uk

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Since 2009 practitioner psychologists have been subject to statutory regulation by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Therefore, to practise as a forensic psychologist you are required to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Chartered Forensic Psychologist status makes you eligible to apply to the HCPC for registration as a registered Forensic Psychologist. For more information, see www.hcpc-uk.org
Entry Requirements, Fees and How to Apply

Entry Requirements

All applicants must have a good honours degree (2:1 or above) or other qualification that is recognised by the British Psychological Society as conferring the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC). We welcome applications from international students with degrees in psychology, for who GBC is not a pre-requisite.

Applicants are also required to have obtained some work or research experience within a forensic setting. There are no strict requirements as regards the length or nature of this experience. Some successful applicants have worked on a voluntary basis with Victim Support or other charities. Others have mentored young offenders on a part-time basis, or have taken positions as trainee or assistant forensic psychologists for several months. Still others have undertaken voluntary or paid work for the police service.

We do take students straight after their undergraduate degree, provided that the student has obtained relevant experience before or during their undergraduate career. People approaching the final year of their undergraduate degree are also encouraged to conduct a forensically-oriented dissertation to get experience of conducting research in this area.

The Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC)

In order to confirm that your qualifications confer the Graduate Basis of Chartered membership of the BPS, you will need to contact the institution that awarded your qualification and/or the BPS. For some degrees GBC is dependent on the particular combinations of modules you completed, so you may need to provide the BPS with an official transcript of your qualification. It is important not to confuse GBC with membership of the BPS. Some degrees in psychology are sufficient to allow graduates to become members of the BPS but do not confer GBC. The situation is particularly

“...the combination of the practical and theoretical components of the course has placed me in an optimum position to pursue my chosen career.”
complex for students with non-UK degrees as the BPS recognises some non-UK degrees but not others.

If you would like to apply for the MSc in Forensic Psychology but are unsure about the status of your current qualifications, please contact the BPS. Please see the BPS website at www.bps.org.uk and for any GBC related queries www.bps.org.uk/membership/grades/sc_gbr.cfm

English Language Requirements

Applicants whose first language is not English and who have not lived in a country where the first language is English for at least three years immediately prior to the commencement of the course are required to provide evidence of a minimum standard of English language ability. The usual requirement is a score of 6.5 or above in the British Council’s IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test or its equivalent, including a score of 4.0 in the Test of Written English (TWE), (e.g. Test of English as a foreign language 600) (TOEFL).

Where one of the above qualifications has not recently been obtained, or where, for any other reasons, there is doubt about an applicant’s English language ability, the University reserves the right to set a test of competence, validated by its English Language Teaching Unit.

Fees and Finance

The fee for the MSc in Forensic Psychology for Home and EU nationals for 2014/2015 is £7,150. The fee for International studies is £15,995. See our website for sources of funding.

Professional and Career Development Loan:
Professional and Career Development Loans are bank loans to pay for courses and training that help with your career or help get you into work. You may be able to borrow between £300 and £10,000. Loans are usually offered at a reduced interest rate and the government pays interest while you are studying. You should apply three months before your course starts to give the bank enough time to process your application. For further information see www.gov.uk/career-development-loans

Employer funding:
If you are currently employed in the field of forensic psychology, your employer may be able to support you by fully or partially paying your tuition fees.

Professional Associations:
Professional Associations can offer grants and loans at a preferential rate. Assistance is also available from trusts, charities and foundations. Both the Grants Register (published by Macmillan) and the Charities Digest (published by Waterlow Information Services) provide information on these sources of funding. They are both available from any university or good public library.

Applying

Applications should normally be completed online. Advice, guidance and the forms themselves can be found on our application webpages. If you have any queries about applying our staff are happy to advise you. www.le.ac.uk/pgapplyonline

If you are unable to complete the form online, you can submit your application by post. Please go to www.le.ac.uk/graduateoffice/application_form.pdf

All applications must be received by the end of May.

The number of places on the course will not exceed 25 and selection for the course is on the basis of interview. Due to the high demand for places, competition is strong. When selecting candidates for interview we look for applicants with relevant theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Some interviews will be held before the closing date, although the course will not be filled until all applications that arrive before the closing date have been considered.

Late applications will not be considered.

References

As selection for interview is based on written applications, references are important. Applicants are therefore asked to provide two references from higher education academic institutions – references from school teachers, sixth form college teachers, or family friends are not acceptable. Furthermore, at least one referee must be from the institution that awarded your GBC accredited qualification. The nominated referees must be in a position to comment, preferably from experience, on your academic ability and potential with regard to the Course.

Any queries please contact:

Ms Anna Mazur

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w: www.le.ac.uk/psychology
Course Staff

Dr Emma Palmer, PhD, CPsychol (Forensic)

Dr Emma Palmer is a Reader in Forensic Psychology and the Course Director of the MSc in Forensic Psychology. She is a Chartered Forensic Psychologist and HCPC registered Forensic Psychologist.

Emma’s research interests include the development of offending, with reference to social cognition and family; the design and evaluation of interventions with offenders; and offender risk and needs assessments. She has conducted research funded by the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and Northern Ireland Office examining the effectiveness of interventions for offenders serving community sentences and for women offenders. She has published extensively in these areas, and is the author of the book Offending behaviour: Moral reasoning, criminal conduct and the rehabilitation of offenders (2003, Willan Publishing), and the co-edited book Offending behaviour programmes: Development, application and controversies (2006, John Wiley) with Clive Hollin.

Dr Julian Boon, PhD, CPsychol (Forensic)

Julian is a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology, Chartered Forensic Psychologist and HCPC registered Forensic Psychologist.

For over twenty years he has been helping the police with their enquiries into diverse crimes including arson, rape, murder, and extortion. Currently he is engaged by the National Crime Agency as a Forensic Clinical Psychology Consultant – to assist in cases which are particularly intractable from a psychological perspective. He regularly gives evidence to the Parole Board giving future risk assessments on prisoners who have been convicted of serious offences.

Dr Heather Flowe, BA, MA, PhD

Dr Heather Flowe is a Lecturer in Forensic Psychology.

She joined the department in September 2008, after completing her PhD in Experimental Psychology followed by a Faculty Fellowship at the University of California, San Diego, US. One line of Heather’s research focuses on face processing in criminal identification line-ups. The goal is to develop strategies for constructing line-ups that minimise the rate of erroneous eyewitness identifications. In addition to laboratory research on line-ups, she has conducted field and archival research studying the behaviour of actual eyewitnesses in criminal cases prosecuted in the United States. Other recent lines of research include examining the role that victim characteristics play in the prosecution of rape cases, as well as determining the factors that affect decision making in the criminal justice system.

Dr Ruth Hatcher, BA, MSc, PhD, CPsychol (Forensic)

Ruth Hatcher is a Lecturer in Forensic Psychology and a Chartered Forensic Psychologist.

Ruth joined the School of Psychology in 2002 as a Research Associate managing the evaluation of Home Office offending behaviour programmes and became a Lecturer the following year. Ruth’s major research area is the evaluation of interventions for offenders. Ruth has undertaken research funded by the Home Office, the Northern Ireland Office and the Ministry of Justice. Ruth’s PhD investigated attrition from offending behaviour programmes using quantitative and qualitative methods, and she currently holds a British Academy research grant which aims to investigate the impact of attrition on medium-term reconviction outcomes. Ruth has also conducted research projects into the impact of working with forensic populations and the issues of bullying and victimisation within prisons.

Professor Clive Hollin, BSc, PhD, CPsychol (Forensic)

Clive Hollin is Professor of Criminological Psychology

He wrote the best-selling textbook Psychology and Crime: An Introduction to Criminological Psychology (1989, Routledge), of which an extensively rewritten 2nd edition has just been published (2013, Routledge). In all, he has published 22 books alongside 300 other academic publications. He was co-editor of the journal Psychology, Crime, & Law from 1992-2012. Alongside his various university appointments, he has worked as a psychologist in prisons, the Youth Treatment Service, special hospitals, and regional secure units. In 1998 he received The Senior Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Field of Legal, Criminological and Forensic Psychology from The British Psychological Society. His main research interest is the design and evaluation of interventions intended to reduce crime.

Ms Anna Mazur

Anna is the Course Administrator for the MSc in Psychology.

Anna’s main responsibilities are to manage the administrative systems, procedures and processes for the courses. She is the first point of contact for the majority of prospective and current students’ queries.
Student Life

Campus

On our bustling compact campus it’s rare to walk from one end to the other without bumping into someone you know along the way. The campus is a vibrant community, with all manner of places to meet, eat and drink, as well as study. We’re committed to providing you with high quality facilities and our £1bn campus development plan ensures all our resources meet the needs of modern and ambitious students.

Students’ Union

The Students’ Union is brimming with opportunities that will make your time at Leicester unforgettable. The spectacular Percy Gee building boasts superb facilities, from bookshops to bars and the fantastic live-music venue, O₂ Academy Leicester. You are encouraged to get involved with the SU – there are over 200 student societies covering a huge range – sport, politics, media, performing arts and much, much more. It’s a great way of meeting new people, gaining skills or trying something completely different!

Accommodation

Our accommodation offers you a wide variety of choice. Whether you fancy self-catered or catered, en-suite or standard, there will be a package to suit you. Our halls at Oadby are surrounded by beautiful Botanic Gardens and offer a thriving social life. Accommodation in the city gives you independence and the amenities of the city right on your doorstep. You are guaranteed a room in halls if you apply for accommodation by 1 September of your year of entry.

www.le.ac.uk/accommodation

Sports facilities

The University has recently invested £10m in its sports facilities. You can enjoy a work out, take a swim or work up a sweat in a fitness class at our sports centres on campus or at Manor Road (next to the Oadby Student Village). You are also encouraged to get involved with our sports clubs, which welcome members of all abilities. Keen competitors can also represent the University through Team Leicester, the hotly-contested Varsity matches and get involved with our thriving Intramural events.

www.le.ac.uk/sports

Embrace Arts

The University has its own arts centre, Embrace Arts, with a packed programme for students and the public, featuring music, dance, theatre, comedy as well as exhibitions. It also runs courses covering everything from salsa dancing to jewellery making. Students can get concessionary prices and discounts on courses and workshops.

www.embracearts.co.uk

About the City of Leicester

Leicester is a lively and diverse city and the tenth largest in Britain. It has all the activities and facilities you would expect, with a friendly and safe atmosphere. The city centre is just a short walk from campus so you’ll never be far from the action.

Leicester’s diverse heritage is reflected in a dazzling array of festivals and cultural experiences including the largest Diwali celebrations outside India, the UK’s longest running Comedy Festival, the eclectic Summer Sundae Music Festival, and the University’s hugely successful book festival – Literary Leicester.

Recent developments have led to the opening of the world-class Curve Theatre and Phoenix Square Independent Arts Centre in the new Cultural Quarter, which complement Leicester’s existing array of cinemas, theatres, museums and galleries. The sparkling Highcross complex features 110,000 square metres of retail therapy, bars, cafés and restaurants. For those with independent tastes Leicester Lanes houses a variety of boutiques and specialist shops.

As you would expect from a true student city, there is a huge variety of bars, clubs and live music venues that cater for all kinds of tastes. Food lovers are treated to a fantastic selection of restaurants, with specialities available from every corner of the world.
Further Information

This brochure is designed to give you an overview of our postgraduate programmes leading to degree awards.

We are committed to developing the flexibility of our postgraduate provision, and, on some of our programmes, are able to offer a number of variations on the part-time route to a postgraduate qualification short of a Master’s degree. If you are interested in taking just a selection of our subjects for a postgraduate certificate or diploma, please get in touch to discuss your needs. It is even possible to take a single subject as part of your continuing professional development.

The information in this brochure is up to date, but changes and developments do occur. We do our best to keep our website up to date, and encourage all applicants to spend some time finding out about the School of Psychology by consulting it at:

www.le.ac.uk/psychology

Much more detailed information about all our postgraduate programmes (including a number of study abroad options for postgraduates) can be found on our web pages at www.le.ac.uk/psychology

We also welcome your enquiries and will do our best to respond quickly with the information you seek.

All enquiries should be addressed to am565@le.ac.uk

In addition to the MSc in Forensic Psychology, the School of Psychology also offers an MSc in Psychological Research Methods, and postgraduate distance-learning courses: MSc in Occupational Psychology, MSc/PGDip in Psychology of Work, and MSc/PGDip/PGCert in Child and Adolescent Mental Health.
Contact Details

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All information in this brochure was correct at the time of going to press. However, changes and developments are part of the life of the University, and alterations may occur to the programmes and services described in this brochure.